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From the Office of the Director of Health

Public Encouraged to Take “Healthy Climate Pledge”

At a press conference Monday morning, the Springfield-Greene County Health Department and its partners encouraged the public to take just one step to reduce the impact of climate change on public health.

“There is a direct connection between climate change and our health,” said director Kevin Gipson. “As members of our community understand the connection, they will be armed with the information they need to make choices and lead lifestyles that are healthy for themselves, our community and the environment.”

The World Health Organization reports that changes in the Earth’s climate caused by humans, now leads to at least 5 million cases of illness and more than 150,000 deaths each year. Negative health impacts can include an increased risk of heat stroke, hypothermia, asthma, cardiovascular and pulmonary illness.

The health department is a frontline responder in the effort to prevent climate change’s negative impacts on public health. Programs such as air quality control, stream testing and weeds and trash removal are working to protect public health daily by protecting our environment.

“Partners in Health” awards were also given to City Utilities and the Discovery Center for their outstanding efforts and programs that promote education and a healthy environment.

“Those of us in the public health community understand the important role we play in educating the public, taking action ourselves and supporting agencies that are already working in this arena,” added Gipson. “But, we also need the public to participate. We encourage each person in our community to take just one step today to protect our environment.”

Gipson suggested,

Be prepared – learn about climate change and its impact on your health

Travel differently – walk, carpool, bicycle, use public transportation

Eat differently – buy from a community farmer’s market, eat less meat and more fruits and vegetables

Green your work – use recycled paper, purchase an energy-saver computer, telecommute

Green your home – insulate to conserve energy, reuse or recycle materials, conserve water

“Each of us has an opportunity to make smart decisions about the lifestyle we lead, Gipson added. “A lot of the time what’s good for our health is also good for the environment.”

More information is available online at <http://health.springfieldmo.gov> or by calling (417) 864-1658.

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